May, 1997 and a special meeting with the Secretary to GOI by Kerala government, on the possibility of establishing consumer protection centres in Kerala for the interest of the public in consumer activities an action plan was finalised and it was decided to establish consumer information centres at Trivandrum. Kochin and Kozhikode;

(b) if so, the details thereof:

(c) whether the Kerala Government has requested for additional financial assistance for the purpose: and

(c) if so, the details thereof and Government's reacion thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI SATYA PAL SINGH YADAV): (a) to (d) A proposal to establish Consumer Information Centres at Thriuvanathapuram, Kochi and Kozikode has been received from Govt. of Kerala. This was duly examined. Since the Central Standing Committee on Consumer welfare Fund had taken a decision to provide financial assistance for one such centre in each State/UT to begin with, the State Government was advised to submit their proposal for one such centre in the proforma prescribed under the consumer Welfare Fund Rules, 1992.

World Bank's observation on TPDS

1118. SHRI O.P. KOHLI: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item appearing in the Statesman of 9th February, 1999 under the caption. "TPDS open to fraud: World Bank"; and

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI SATYA PAL SINGH YADAV): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) With a view to ensure proper functioning of the Trageted Public distribution System (TPDS) it has been impressed upon the State and the Union Territories that greater transparency should be introduced in the working of the system, inspection schedules should be drawn up for the District Taluk level officers right from the Collector District Magistrate to the Inspector of Supplies, Vigilance Committees should be constituted and their regular functioning ensured. A Model Citizens' Charter for TPDS has also been prepared and circulated to the State/UTs for adoption.

As per the news item, the World Banbk report points out that the highest gains to the poor would come from, iter alia, phasing out completely the second and the untargated channal of PDS. The proposal to bar the affluent sections of the society from access to PDS was discussed in the Conference of Chief Ministrers held of Basic Minimum Services (BMS) held during 4-5 July. 1996.

The Conference, however, felt that as a large section of the population who may be above the poverty line (APL) are also at present getting the benefit of the PDS, suitable measures should be taken to ensure availability of essential commodities at reasonable prices to this section. The general consensus in the Conference of Chief Ministers held on 30.9.1997 to review implementation of TPDS was that there should be no reduction in the allocation to APL families. It has not been possible to exclude the non-poor from PDS because of the lack of consensus on this issue.

Taking Sugar of Loan For PDS

1119. SHRI GHUFRAN AZAM: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken sugar on loan from various millers in the country to meet the demand of PDS;